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LARSON SUPPORTS TROOPS AND GENEVA CONVENTIONS

WASHINGTON ♦ U.S. Representative John B. Larson (CT-1) today voted against H.R. 6166, legislation authorizing military tribunals for suspected terrorists. It passed the House by a vote of 253 to 168.

♦This so-called ♦compromise♦ fails to establish a fair and legally sound process for holding and trying detainees, ♦Larson said. ♦It violates sixty years of international obligations under the Geneva Conventions by allowing the President to define, on his own, what is and is not torture.

♦We abide by the U.S. Constitution and that is what makes us different from the terrorists. Terrorists do not deserve special treatment, but they do deserve the rights that they wish to abolish through their hateful activities. Military lawyers and judges have testified before Congress that any ambiguity in our ban on abuse and torture gives our enemies an excuse to engage in abusive and torturous activities against American soldiers and citizens. That is an unacceptable risk.

♦This bill falls short of the rule of law by denying detainees the basic right of habeas corpus by giving the Administration the broad authority to hold suspects indefinitely and without charge. And, the trials established in this legislation fail to meet the requirements of due process and lack an effective appeals process.

♦There is no doubt that terrorists who attack our nation and our citizens should be brought to swift and complete justice. However, we must do so in a way that upholds our longstanding

notions of freedom and justice that define us as Americans. The President could have done this. Instead, his unconstitutional military tribunals have caused not a single one of the terrorists who planned the 9/11 attacks to be brought to trial. Congress has been required to enact legislation that will create military commissions to try terrorist suspects that will withstand the scrutiny of the Supreme Court. This bill does meet that task.

◆Unfortunately, the Republican-controlled Rules Committee once again refused to allow a number of amendments offered by my colleagues to improve this legislation and possibly vote in unison. That is what is most objectionable about this legislation. This is a severely flawed bill that I cannot support.◆

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